

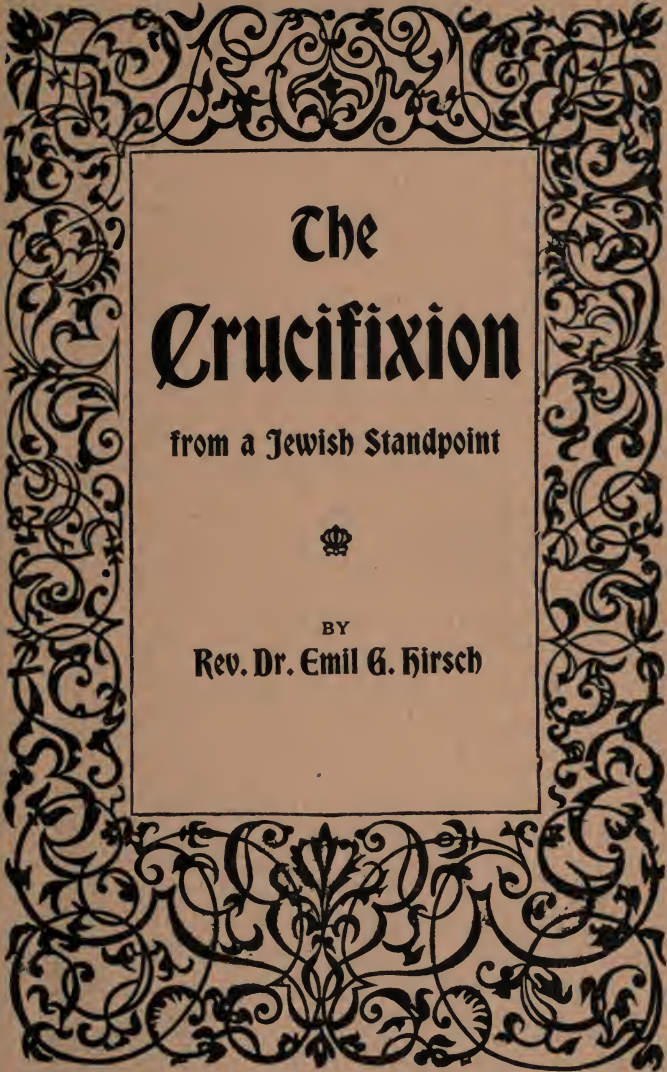
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The Crucifixion

from a Jewish Standpoint



BY
Rev. Dr. Emil G. Hirsch

The Crucifixion

Viewed from a Jewish Standpoint

A LECTURE DELIVERED BY INVITATION
BEFORE THE "CHICAGO INSTITUTE FOR
MORALS, RELIGION AND LETTERS"

BY

Rev. Dr. Emil G. Hirsch

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VIEWED FROM A JEWISH STANDPOINT

WHEREVER religion builds her altars, there flames a burning bush, and he who would draw near to it in the proper spirit, must be mindful of the caution addressed to the old Hebrew shepherd: "Veil thy countenance, take off thy shoes, for the ground on which thou standest is holy." Religion is ever thought about the highest and deepest themes and motives of life. He who has no religion, may scoff at the convictions of another; but one who himself cherishes as the best he has, his own religious principles, will only reverently enter upon the discussion of his neighbor's religious creed, and even when he differs from him or has reason to reject one or the other fact upon which his brother rears his temple, he will never for the mere purpose of denial, or to fill a vacant hour with a ribald jest, presume to raise his voice in the other man's sanctuary.

The subject which I am to handle, is fraught with great difficulties. It centers in a tragedy which for millions of the human family symbolizes the supreme moment of all history. The cross, which is the sign of that majestic and awful event, has spelled for thousands and thousands the message of hope, making life bearable under stress, testing to the utmost human endurance. As such token of redemption, it wel-

comes the new-born babe, and speeds the parting soul to the realms of light. How often has it steeled with courage despairing hearts! How often has it whispered words of love unto lonely souls! Its gleam sends joyfully the soldier to the battle; consoles him when wounded, and upholds him when facing terror and danger! But the very same crucifix, which for so many is emblematic of the noblest and highest that ever graced earth, recalls, too, a charge under which now for fifteen centuries the Jews have pined, an accusation which brought upon and still brings upon the kinsmen of him who was the central figure of the supposed drama, sufferings beggaring description, and distrust most bitter to bear. Is that charge well-founded? No Jew can be indifferent to what the answer to this question will be. He need not deny, and he will not deny, the providential mission of Christianity, nor the rich blessings which it conferred upon the races of men.

Whatever the Jew's religious bias may be, believer in divine government, as he is, he will, confronted with so stupendous a phenomenon, as is the growth and power of Christianity, willingly acknowledge that under God's purposes, this grand movement was necessary, dowered and destined to lift toward the stars beings altogether too prone to grovel in the dust. But for all this, the Jew, remembering his own history, cannot shirk the duty of examining the accounts upon which the charge is based, that his ancestors at the most promising period of his history, laid heavy hands upon one who was, if not more, the noblest type of humanity. Assuming this task, no thought can be further from his mind than the desire to change the re-

ligious convictions, or to shake the religious hopes of even the least among his fellow-men. Not in defiance, but in defense, must the Jew voice his views on that catastrophe which has forever made gloomy Golgotha most glorious in the eyes of Christendom, while at the same time it has rendered the name of that hill a synonym, not of love, but hatred, to which were exposed the children of those whom he who died there with a prayer on his lips in behalf of his enemies, would willingly have called his brethren.

Today, one might, if so minded, dispose of the whole matter most briefly, and in a few words, by urging as correct what many non-Jewish writers have claimed, and to prove which, many thick and learned books have been published, that Jesus never lived. Of course, if there never was a teacher of Nazareth, there never could have been such a close of his life as the concluding chapters of the gospels tell us there was. If Bruno Bauer's theory, as most finely spun in his work, "Christ and the Cæsars," is accepted, the Jew is at once purged of the guilt of having put to death the Messiah. But I, for one, cannot concede that the figure of the Nazarene is altogether an after-thought or an after-formation. Though the critics of the school to which Bauer belongs, and which today is ably represented by Dutch professors, display considerable scholarship to make out the case, that Christianity is the impersonal outcome of an alliance between Stoicism and Hellenistic Alexandrian Judaism, and Jesus the assumed and freely invented personal incarnation of an impersonal movement; I, with many others, must hold that such great historical processes always take their rise from personal sources.

After due allowance for whatever circumstances may have contributed toward the making of Christianity, and toward its spread in the world, and after the deduction of whatever the conditions of the Judean and non-Judean mind at this critical period have undoubtedly produced, we are still face to face with a remainder for which the non-personal forces give no satisfactory explanation. There is no doubt that Stoic philosophy acted as the plow, preparing the ancient world for the reception of the new seed. Nor can it be questioned that without Alexandrian Judaism, Christianity would be suspended like the coffin of Mohammed, in mid-air. But the point of contact where two movements of this kind meet, lies always in one great heart, is always one great creative mind, in whom, unconsciously and yet potently, all the scattered rays gather, who thus becomes the focus which sends out again with greater intensity, flashes of light into succeeding darkness. If now it be said that Paul the Apostle is this great personality creating Christianity, much truth is voiced in this statement, and still the whole truth is not exhausted. Of course, without the activity of Paul, Christianity would never have become what it has. As a dogmatic system, it has to recognize in him of Tarsus its founder, but he utilized a personal Jesus as the incarnation of his Christ idea. Such a personal life was not the free invention of his imagination; he himself had heard the story of the life of Jesus from others who had known him. Around the carpenter's son of Nazareth he wove Messianic ideas of his own, as modified by the thoughts which Judean Greek philosophy and the Stoic schools had worked out.

But while I will not question the personal element in

the origination of Christianity, I must insist, all the more strenuously, upon the fact that the accounts which pass as a biography of Jesus, are the works of men, and of a period that never had from personal contact or conversation, knowledge of him. In other words, we have no biography of the teacher of Nazareth. He must have spent his life in comparative retirement. The influence he exercised upon his contemporaries could not have been as deep and great as we generally suppose from our acquaintance with the gospels. For how can one account otherwise for the strange fact, that not one of the historians or writers living at or shortly after the time during which we must suppose him to have moved about in Palestine teaching and exhorting, preserves even his name. Josephus does not mention him; for the often-quoted passage in which an allusion to him occurs, is unmistakably an interpolation.

In the Jewish writings of that period, as in the non-expurgated editions of the Talmud, there are about twenty passages which seem to have a reference to him. But the connection and the character of these plainly indicate that they are the echo, blurred and indistinct, of some New Testament tradition. Historical data concerning the life and the end of the founder of Christianity, are not found in the Talmud. The Palestinian sources are utterly silent on this whole matter, even the name under which Jesus there is indicated, is, at the earliest, a creation of the third century. What the Babylonian Talmud offers in this connection, consists of a few conceptions which were formed clearly after Christianity had become the religion of state, about the beginning of the fourth century, and are de-

rived from notions, which, based upon the condition of the Christianity of that time, were transferred, although without historical value, and altogether uncorroborated by tradition, to the founder of the religion. The early ecclesiastical fathers know little more of Jesus than a few anecdotes, and the writings of St. Paul show that the apostle was not acquainted with the details of his life.

The gospels, this is the incontrovertible result of modern criticism as carried on by eminent Christian scholars in Germany and Holland, are not the works of the men whose names they bear. They are not the recorded recollections of eye-witnesses. Even if we discredit the theory of the Tuebingen school, we must acknowledge, and the more conservative scholars acknowledge, that our four gospels are a collection of fragments which received their present shape, at the earliest, during the opening years of the second Christian century. Bauer may have overstated the case when he claimed that first there was a gospel written in Aramaic, now lost, the so-called Hebrew gospel, reflecting altogether the opinions of the Ebionites, and believed to be the work of Matthew and Peter, from which the present Matthew is a free elaboration of a less narrow Judæo-Christian character, and with a broader universalistic tendency; Luke, originally a Paulinian gospel, but remodeled later, representing the Judæan or Ebionite party; Mark, occupying a neutral ground between these two, and consisting of extracts from both.

But even according to the most recent criticism which has largely departed from the Tuebingen school, Mark is considered to be the earliest form in which the

life of Jesus was reduced to writing. But it was preceded by a collection of sayings now worked into the account by both the authors of Matthew and Luke, each one following in doing this, a plan of his own, the former being more artificial, because more systematic. Taking then the most conservative estimate of the date of our gospels, we must conclude that at least two generations intervened between those who wrote down the events and those who could have been eye-witnesses to them. This date, however, upon closer examination, proves to be still too early. If we bear in mind that the gospels in many particulars betray a strange lack of acquaintance with the institutions, the thoughts and the parties of the Jewish people during its national existence, the impression becomes almost certainty that the final authors must have lived in times when Jewish national life with all of its aspirations and ambitions had long ago ebbed out; that is to say, after the Hadrian war of rebellion.

The quotations occurring in the New from the Old Testament reveal ignorance of the Hebrew text; they are made, if not altogether from the Seventy, from a version closely akin to it, and thus they indicate a condition of things which reigned only at a period when among the Christian writers the Greek version had replaced entirely the text of the Massorites. Or, in other words, this circumstance, too, points to the close and not the beginning of the second Christian century, and to men who had entirely severed all ties binding them to the religious thought and national conviction of Judaism. From a side light which falls from Jewish literature upon the struggles of the nascent church, we may infer also that the gospels were not extant

in written form before the close of the second century.

Certain expressions of Jewish teachers of the third century show that they were acquainted with the written gospels, and the Mishna itself, probably, was reduced to writing only after the new church had made inroads upon Judaism, and in order to counteract the influence of the written documents of Christianity. This could not have been before the time of Juda Hanassi (end of the second century). Up to that time the story of Jesus's life passed orally from mouth to mouth. Various attempts may have been made to fix it in writing before this, but none succeeded well enough to check all later amplifications. That in the course of such traditions, the legendary element should sprout most luxuriously is natural. A simple tale was embellished, enlarged, overlaid with miraculous stories, and finally cast in the mold of a theological tendency.

The general trustworthiness of Jewish tradition which passed orally from generation to generation, without materially altering the context and verbal text, will not weaken the suspicions of later additions and overworkings in the gospels; for it must be borne in mind that the tradition of the Jews was a living force, dealing with and regulating the practice of every-day life; and where it was not this, the schools had a care and an interest to guard it from foreign intrusions. But the Talmud itself shows to what powerful aids to memory the rabbis had to resort in order to preserve tradition; and moreover, where the legal element is not at stake, in the "Hagadic" portions even Hebrew tradition is not so perfect a channel of the original limpid stream fresh from the virgin spring. The gospels

have all the characteristics of Hebrew "Hagadas." If the suspicion is warranted, that even in respect to the "Halakhas," Hebrew tradition was not so absolutely reliable as is generally supposed, what shall be said of Hagadas passed beyond the pale of the mother, Judaism?

In one regard, however, the composition of the Mishna may be cited as an analogon. It is constructed without plan; its arrangement is entirely mechanical. The composition of the gospels shows the same characteristics. No attempt is made at chronological order; a fact which is recognized by Reuss. The sentences and sayings of the Master are grouped together, as are those of many old Hebrew prophets, not with reference to their own context, but to their verbal form. In this connection, it is extremely interesting to compare the fourth gospel with the three synoptics. That the fourth does not agree with the others is revealed at the very first glance. In its very introduction, it betrays itself to be a philosophical reconstruction of the life of Jesus, nor are the discrepancies in the related events less striking; situations and occurrences, persons and places are introduced, of which no other account makes mention. The scene of the fourth evangel is not Galilæa but Judæa, or more especially Jerusalem, where Jesus finds his adherents and, also, from the very beginning, his opponents. The three excursions to Galilæa are treated as mere episodes. In this manner disappears the common stem of events in which the synoptics are agreed, and thus a whole series of the most important traits of former accounts. Most of the synoptic miraculous deeds are wanting. In this life of Jesus, there are no lepers nor publicans and sinners.

Like the local, so is also the temporal scheme enlarged.

According to the three gospels, the public activity lasts but one year—the same length of time which the fathers of the early church also knew—according to the fourth, three years is the duration of Jesus's public career. Nor is the day of death of Jesus the same. While in the three, he dies on the 15th of Nissan, in John he expires on the 14th, a change which is certainly the result of theological considerations, the tendency being to make Jesus himself the Paschal Lamb of the world, a change which no one could have had an interest to make before the famous controversy as to the proper time of celebrating Easter, which raged in the Churches of Asia Minor during the second half of the second Christian century.

Not to tarry too long by these and other details of difference, I may sum up the character of the fourth gospel in contradistinction to the others, as an ideal, pneumatic work. Its home was not Palestine but Asia Minor, and the date of composition cannot be placed earlier than 150 after Christ. This comparison of the fourth gospel with the three others, shows how the pictures of Jesus gradually formed and changed, enlarged and deepened. Current in the mouth of his disciples and among the young churches, were many stories about his deeds, his birth, his life and his death. As is the case always with such tradition, they grow steadily from small beginnings as they pass from mouth to mouth, and from generation to generation, and often are enlarged by the addition of foreign elements.

This process goes on unconsciously, until finally under the treatment of skilled minds, when about to be

reduced to writing, the material is sifted, arranged and recast in accordance with principles and conceptions, treasured as being of truth absolute. Orthodox writers infer that under the dissolving acids of criticism of this kind, the writers of Biblical books, will all appear to be mere impostors, inventors either themselves of deceptions, or victims of fraudulent delusions. Those who, by such argument, desire or attempt to brush aside the results of critical studies, merely betray their own ignorance of the operations of those laws according to which the creative genius of all time and place, molds unconsciously the soft clay of legend and tradition, and shapes it so as to express ideas and ideals accepted as undoubted truth. Impostors are always conscious of their impositions. The writers of the Biblical books are ignorant of the fact that they do not write history. They had not the least suspicion that tradition had often enlarged and as frequently reduced the original figure. But what they give us, notwithstanding their ignorance, is of greater importance than all the historical facts which they could have collected. They allow us to peep into the very soul of their own times. They thus throw light on ideas and truths, which in themselves may not be facts, but which are the very buttments upon which facts always must rest.

The gospels, as we have them, cannot have been the unstudied writings of fishermen. They all have marks which betray the literary skill of men trained in the handling of the pen. Take, for instance, Matthew. The genealogy with which he opens his account, is clearly systematically constructed so as to bring out three series of generations, consisting of twice seven members. In fact, all throughout he works in sets of

three or seven. In the desert we have three temptations, as also in Gethsemane. Seven is the number of his parables, as it is that of the Lamentations, while ten (seven plus three) are the miracles.

Such being the age and the character of the gospels, one might well despair of ever succeeding in separating the later additions and the artificial elements from the earlier and historically trustworthy, so as to reconstruct approximately the early life of Jesus, were it not that the history of cotemporaneous Judaism affords powerful aids to the student endeavoring to glean an insight into the positive work and the life of the Nazarene. Most of his modern biographers have neglected to take this into account; and, in consequence, they have written novels, spun on dogma, or pinned to preconceived idealizations, but not histories. Of course, an orthodox need scarcely weigh the determining factors of cotemporaneous conditions. Christ, for him stands outside of all historical nexus. The laws of historical development cannot be applied to him. But whosoever recognizes that even genius is rooted in time and place, will not forget to probe, as far as possible, into the surroundings into which great persons and personalities, were born.

A Jesus who does not belong to the Jewish people, and is represented as opposed to the best for which the Jewish spirit then worked and hoped, remains a figment of fancy, but not a figure of flesh and blood that could have been seen of men on earth, and at the time when we must hold him to have walked among men in the body. Had the writers on Jesus remembered this, long ago, the charge which even today is repeated in the pulpits and taught as voicing truth to the young in

the Sunday schools, that the Jews were instrumental in affixing to the cross Jesus of Nazareth, would have been modified, or perhaps have been silenced altogether. Should even the criticism of the gospels as literary productions, such as I have attempted to outline, be disproved by riper scholarship and more careful examination hereafter, should even the most orthodox view of the origin of the New Testament prevail, the question would still remain: What interest might the Jews living at that time have had, in removing that teacher to whom the multitude listened with joy?

Whenever a crime is committed, the perpetrator of which is unknown, but must be detected, those charged with the duty to bring criminals to justice, will attempt to establish above all, *the one fact in whose interest the crime could have been committed*. "*Cui prodest?*" is the guiding question of every trained penologist confronted with murder whose mystery awaits to be cleared up. Allowing, for argument's sake, that the gospels do present a biography in the sense in which most orthodox Christians claim, forgetting all that we have said about the composition, the age, and the authors of the New Testament historical books, we would ask this selfsame question as the detective puts it to himself whenever duty calls him to strain his ingenuity in tracking a murderer. Who had, in those times, an interest in the removal of Jesus? Who was profited by his death? Who was disturbed by his teachings? In whose eyes could his activity have been dangerous? And in whom could his personality have been provocative of antipathy and aversion?

The supposition that his religious opinions and practice clashed with the Judaism of his time, is clearly un-

tenable. While it cannot be denied that the religious susceptibilities of the people were strung to the highest tension, nothing, however, appears, even in those accounts of Jesus's life that have come to us, which would make it plausible that he taught or did aught which could have aroused religious opposition on the part even of the most punctilious among the Jews. He, himself, disclaims any intention of founding a new religion. As he is pictured in the gospels, especially according to Matthew, he is national in his sympathies to the core. He shares the national antipathy to the non-Jew; he would not throw pearls before the swine, or invite to the banquet such as are not of his people, while his own compatriots are hungering for the bread.

Salvation, according to him, is only for the Israelites. His position thus agrees, without the possibility of a modification, with the prevalent conceit of the ruling party in Judaism. For him, as for them, religion is co-incident and co-extensive with nationality. He is far from disregarding the law. He emphasizes his mission as one come to fulfill but not to abolish it. The term "fulfill" in this connection can only be understood if translated back into its original Hebrew or Aramaic. It certainly cannot have the bearing generally attributed to it by the current Christian theology. Fulfillment in the sense in which Paul and the church after him have taught it, is a concept altogether foreign to the thought world of the Jew. The phrase attributed to the Nazarene cannot but be that which we find in the daily prayers as preserved up to the present day in the common ritual of the synagogue: "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill," recalls to one familiar with

Jewish liturgy, the passage in which is voiced the petition for "understanding to do and fulfill (*L'quayem*) all the words of the Torah."

The controversies in which Jesus is represented to have been engaged with the Pharisees and the Scribes, reveal not even one single trait that would countenance the assumption of a departure on his part from the well-recognized principles and standards of Jewish orthodox practice. His saying that the Sabbath is made for man and not man for the Sabbath is an echo of a well-known rabbinical contention: "The Sabbath is given in your charge, you are not given in its charge." That to save life and to help the sufferers, the most rigid prohibition could be set aside on the Sabbath, is a fact which none will deny who has never so superficial an acquaintance with Talmudical dialectics. The argument, thus, that on account of his peculiar religious doctrines or his disregards of the rights of the synagogue, Jesus aroused the hostility of the Jews among whom he moved and lived, is not worthy of serious attention.

Nor is the Lord's Prayer as novel a revelation as many have insisted. The simplicity, the sublimity of this prayer, are beyond all question. Its influence over men has been one of the richest sources of idealism from which humanity ever has been privileged to drink in invigoration. Its brief but stirring petitions have been stammered by the innocent lips of childhood repeating the sacred accents after the devoted mother, transported to higher peaks of joy by the thought and the sweetness of her duty to teach her little babe, in those grand old terms, to invoke the help and protection of the divine father. That prayer appeals to the

rich and to the poor; it wings with courage drooping souls; it chastens exuberant joy; it lifts the load of guilt from sinbeset hearts; it strengthens the well-set purpose of him who is intent upon doing good in his generation. From lips of soldiers ready to follow the bugle calling "to arms," it sounds the farewell message to the dear ones whom they must leave behind as they march forth to the defense of hearth and home; its rhythmic lines are breathed heavenward by wife and mother whose fears go out to the husband or son, ploughing with a frail hull the treacherous depths of the oft-angry sea.

In the wilds of Africa, this prayer has brought light to the explorer, in the very gloom of pest-ridden camps, and in palaces flushed with artificial suns, it had the power to remind the oft-reckless tenant to remember of such as wanted for their daily bread. But beautiful as this prayer is, quick with inspiration both by its thoughts and the associations that cluster about it, *Judaism may claim it as its own*. It is not original with him who taught his disciples to speak it when lost in reverence before the altars of the Most High. It is a collection of pearls taken from the jewel-casket of the synagogue and strung together upon one thread. Not one of its blessed phrases but at once awakes to sound a corresponding petition treasured in the liturgy still in use today wherever Jews gather to sing the praises of their God in Heaven, as a chord thrilled into sound, sets vibrating another attuned to the same key.

It is not true, as oft it has been contended, that the term "Father" was unknown in Israel to bring near to the heart of the worshiper the ruler of the universe.

That God is Father, is an assurance which the prophets long before the reign of Augustus had learned to utter; the book of prayers which the Jew opens on the most solemn days, addresses Him in whom we live and move and have our being, as the "Father," and this soft term was, indeed, not borrowed from the exordium of the New Testament formula, but from the source from which it itself drew its own "Our Father which art in heaven." "Hallowed be thy name"—Is this not incorporated in that prayer, which more than any other prayer was the prayer of the people, written in their own language, recited formerly whenever Jews would gather to study the law, come down to us and regarded today yet as so sacred that none would dare even change its phraseology or propose to replace it by a translation in a modern tongue; the prayer which today in the most tearful hours, when death has snatched from loving bosoms one dear and near, from grief-rent hearts wells up to the lips of the mourners, and is intended, by pointing out to them the providence of God, and His eternal purpose, to soothe the burning pain?

It is not too bold an assumption, that in very truth the Quaddish, our Quaddish, is the prototype upon which the Lord's Prayer is patterned; and the Jewish original is anterior to the promulgation of the New Testament copy. In the synagogues of Galilee, Jesus must have heard the Aramaic words, exalting and sanctifying the name of the Highest, and asking that His kingdom come speedily in the world which He had made according to His will. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" are thus familiar strains, oft intoned by the voices of the wor-

shippers in the synagogue. The simile which represents the heavens as the place where God's decree is executed, is founded on an Old Testament metaphor, which names the powerful agents in nature, the messengers of God hastening to do His bidding; and many a prayer incorporated in the Jewish ritual utters the same conviction. God is often addressed as one around whose throne the hosts of angels are gathered, united in love, thrilled with awful reverence, doing the will of their creator.

The question which should be the form in which to clothe a brief prayer, was considered carefully by the rabbis of the Talmud, and one of them proposes that this be it:—"Thy will be done in heaven, and peace of heart come to those who revere thee on earth." "May it be thy will" is the standing introduction to all petitions which the pious Jew would lay before the throne of grace. "Give us this day our daily bread" is also a brief contraction of a prayer which we meet in the Talmud (Ber. 29 b.). "May it be thy pleasure to grant to each what he needs for his sustenance." There is reason to suspect that the real intention of the Master in making use of this expression, "our daily bread," was to lay near to the heart of his followers a thought that often we find among the rabbis. He had in mind—at least I should hold so—the rabbinical caution, not to harbor anxiety about the provisions for the coming day. If the daily needs were filled, trust in God should steel the soul of the faithful with confidence that He who creates the day would also provide the wherewith to nourish man. Says Rabbi Eliezer: "He who has enough for one day and asks, 'what shall I eat tomorrow?' is faint of faith." (Conf. Wuensche, page 87.)

"Forgive us our sins," is indeed here expressed in strict accordance with the Talmudical notion, that man forever stands in the relation of a debtor to God, his creditor.

Petitions for remission of sin are by no means unfrequent in the Jewish order of prayer; and that man should release those who were in debt to him—for this is the meaning of the second half of this petition in the Lord's prayer;—reflects certain well-known provisions in the Old Testament legislation in favor of the debtor class, as well as similar injunctions, not to be hard-hearted, with which Talmudical writings teem. To understand the next succeeding passage, "Lead us not into temptation," we need but open the old Hebrew prayer-book, and we find among the very first prayers ordained for daily use at rising, the request, not to bring us into the hand of temptation, or into that of shame, and the concluding, "Deliver us from all evil," would not be a mooted point between the old and the new revised version of the New Testament, where in the new, we have the translation "from the evil one," as though the qualification had reference to Satan, if the very Jewish prayer to which I just now have referred, had been consulted.

The Jew prays in the morning to be delivered from an evil neighbor and from bad association. Though the analogies and parallel passages between the Lord's prayer and the ritual of the synagogue have not been exhausted by the preceding quotations, enough, I think, of them have been adduced to substantiate the claim that Jesus prayed as all the Jews of his time did; that no one could take exception to his proposed formula, let alone be shocked by it. Every thought of that

grand epitome of the Jewish prayer-book is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. His prayer did not provoke opposition; it did not rouse slumbering suspicions of possible adversaries. On account of his religious views, his attitude to the law and to worship, no Jew could have found pretext to protest against the teacher of Nazareth.

But it is said that Jesus virtually taught a new morality, and that therefore the anger of the rabbis was stirred against him. This plea can look back on a history of fifteen hundred years, a history which is a sad commentary on the rigid antithesis between the morality of Judaism, which is said to be one of the law, and that of Christianity, which is praised as the message of love. Error should not be tolerated on the throne of Truth, however long the usurper may have been the lessee. It was never true that the New Testament morality occupied higher planes than did that of Judaism, as taught by the teachers who were co-eval with the rise of Christianity. The fact that even liberal Christian pulpits still ring the changes on the supposed opposition between Jewish morality and that of the New Testament, does not prove their fundamental proposition, which is, was, and ever will be an inference due to the general ignorance of co-temporaneous Jewish life and writings—an assumption which love of truth should induce, at least liberal-minded persons, to lay aside as an intruder not worthy of further hospitality.

There is not a single maxim in the Sermon on the Mount, in the parables attributed to Jesus, but may be more than duplicated by passages of similar import in the rabbinical writings of that period. Yea, many say-

ings of Jesus have failed of their true interpretation, simply because of the neglect to compare them with the Talmudical sources from which they have flown. The method pursued in the New Testament throughout is that of the Jewish Midrash. Jesus must have learned it in the school-house of his native town, at the feet of Jewish teachers, from the mouth of the Jewish preachers to whom he undoubtedly listened Sabbath after Sabbath. Conceding, for argument's sake, which on critical grounds I cannot allow, that the gospels preserve authentic sermons of the Aggadist of Nazareth, I still will and can insist that in none of them is found aught but is rooted in the teachings, the Biblical interpretations of the Jewish synagogues of that age.

The so-called golden rule had been taught by Hillel eighty years before. Before him we find it in the book of Tobit, as it is well known that among the Greeks, Isocrates, and among the Chinese, Confucius had inculcated the principles of reciprocity. That love for the neighbor as love for God is the sum of the law, is a triumphant confirmation transmitted in the name of more than one rabbi in the rabbinical literature. The term neighbor is not restricted to one of the people of Israel, it embraced all men, in the interpretation of famous Talmudical authorities. What in the ethics of Jesus has been misconstrued into an emphasis on non-resistance as a cardinal virtue, is shown by the study of the rabbinical writings to be merely a figurative way of impressing the duty not to insist upon the strict construction of the law in our dealings with men, but to go one step further and give full scope to equity, which frequently demands sacrifice of one's rights for the sake

of that peace which is the very corner-stone of human society and social life.

“An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” though literally quoted from the text of the Pentateuch, was not the standard of rights which obtained even at that time, among the Jews. Only prejudice can be blind to the modification of the cruel law of taliation, and this law, mark well, existed among all barbaric and semi-barbaric communities, worthy parent as they were to the most “civilized” nations renowned in history,—which had materially in rabbinical legislation, altered the character of its prescription, substituting the money value of the injured organ as ransom and penalty for injury to the organ itself. Long before the sweet voice of this preacher was heard on the mountain, the cruelty of the antecedent barbaric stage of legal development had been turned by the Jewish law, into a just retribution, stern but by no means atrocious, for the wrongs committed and the bodily lesions caused. And as in this instance, the principles enunciated in the gospels were without exception, anticipated by the Jewish mind and heart, so every ethical maxim incorporated in this anthology of ethical sayings, is an echo of the teachings of the synagogue and the schools, with which not merely the learned, but the common people were familiar.

That Jesus never could have pretended that hatred toward the enemy was inculcated by Judaism, if not commanded, stands to reason. Nowhere in the Old Testament can the precept be found, which is put into his mouth as a quotation, “Ye shall hate your enemy.” The difficulty of reconciling the text of Matthew v., verses 43–48, with the contents of the Pentateuch, or of

the other books of the Old Testament, is patent.* Interpreters bent upon saving by all means the authentic traditions of the gospels, and overlooking the circumstances that probably in these verses we are confronted with a corruption of the text, as Jesus, familiar as he was with the literature of his people, could have never made the statement here imputed to him, have held that the point of the controversy and protest of the

* The resentment of injury and insult was considered a prime virtue by the savage nations, with whom, in this regard, even the most cultured peoples of antiquity vied. As we know, this was the case among the Egyptians and Greeks. Speaking of a demotic papyrus, M. Eugene Revillout says that it was one of the guiding principles of the Egyptians, that the famished stomach has no ears, and that to entertain ideas of justice and gentleness, of honesty and forbearance, is contrary to natural instincts sanctioned by the divine order of things, in which all living beings are predestined to devour one another. "One who orders to kill shall be killed himself as a retribution." (Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology, Vol. III., 12.) And the greatest moral teachers of the Greeks held, that it was the destiny of man to excel friends in doing good to them and the enemies in inflicting injury upon them. (Schmidt, *Die Ethik der alten Griechen*, II., p. 309.) And even the Stoics thought it no wrong to injure one who had by insult offered provocation. (*Iacessitus injuria*.) Among the Arabs the Muruwwa enjoined resentment of insult and injury as one of the most manly virtues. Aus b. 'Hajar sings: "Evil I pay to him who evil has done, good to him who good has wrought." While another poet says: "A man among men is he, who late and early thinks how to the enemy damage, to the friend good, he may work." (Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, I., 16-18.)

Master, is directed, not against the Old Testament, but against its peculiar interpretation on the part of the scribes, who they say taught the duty, or if this is too strong a term, excused the tendency to hate one's enemy.

But even the Talmud, great conservator of rabbinical ethics as it is, nowhere preserves even the faintest traces of such an attitude on the part of the rabbis. They did not countenance hatred. Twist and contort as one may some passage or other selected at random, and separated from its context, into a corroboration of the fact that the Jews hated all non-Jews, and were affected with what Tacitus calls, "the hostile odium" against all other men; before the light of strictly honest examination of the passages bearing on this point, the airy constructions and misconstructions which have been multiplied to save this verse in Matthew, cave in, because no foundation supports them.

Quite to the contrary, there is no difficulty to verify the contention, that in the doctrine of the rabbis, in the morals of the Talmud, tolerance, the spirit of conciliatory consideration toward non-Jews, as well as toward one's personal enemies, is most urgently recommended. Says, for instance, the Talmud in Sanhedrin 38a. "One man was the ancestor of all men, so that the just might not claim to have been descended from a just person, and the wicked might not excuse their conduct by pointing to their origin from a wicked parent; so that the later generations might not become proud one against the other, so that none might later think to have the right to kill his fellow-man, his brother, to rob from or to use violence against him." R. Akiba, certainly not on friendly terms with the Romans, is recorded

(B. Q. 113a.) to have taught, that theft from heathens is strictly prohibited. Honesty in one's dealings with pagans is according to rabbinical exegesis, directly commanded in Leviticus xxv. 50, and another sentence (B. Q. Tosephita X.) calls attention to the fact that theft committed against a non-Jew, is greater than one of which an Israelite is the victim. (Conf. Midrash Rabba Debarim, Egebh; Maimonides, H. Mekhira, XVIII., I., H. Genebha, I., 1, 2, H. Gezelah, I., 2.)

Exceedingly numerous are also the passages which prohibit taking advantage of customers by misrepresentation, or even by suppression of facts, though they be not of Jewish faith, while directly the duty is inculcated to extend aid to the poor of the heathens in the same manner as to the Jewish recipients of charity (Gittin 61a.). The honors, due according to the law, to the hoary-headed, were shown to the aged of the non-Jew as well (Qiddooshin 32b. 33a.). The righteous of all nations were promised to share in the blessed state of the hereafter (Sanh. Tosephita XIII.). The efficacy to work a remission of sin attributed to the Jewish sacrifices, was accorded to the good deeds of the non-Israelites (B. B. 10b.). It is said that a non-Jew who lives a moral life, is entitled to the same respect as Israel's High Priest (Conf. Siphra to Lev. xviii. 5).

These sentiments and many similar ones readily suggest themselves to one in the least degree familiar with the rabbinical writings, breathe certainly a spirit as far removed from hatred toward the non-Jew as such, as is the pole from the equator. Personal enmity also, is most strongly condemned in the Old Testament books, as well as in the ethics of the Fathers, and in many

cases the wants of the enemy are pressed to take precedence before the attention required by the friend. It is now generally contended, that for all this, the position of the New Testament is grounded on loftier sentiment, because in the Talmudical ethics, consideration for the enemy is always placed on the ground of prudential policy. Those who urge this, have not taken the trouble to understand the true bearing of the Talmudical phrase, which in these connections appears, "On account of the ways of peace" or one of similar import, "On account of the maintenance of the world." Far from anchoring the injunction which rests upon this principle, to low calculation, the Talmudists have brought out in this motive, the thought of the solidarity, the brotherhood of all men, as essential to the preservation of society; they have emphasized in this wise, the folly of selfishness, which is the root of all hostility and enmity, and counselled its conquest by a remembrance of the higher relationship of reciprocal service, which should bind man to man, and triumph over the petty animosities sprouting from competition and selfish interests.

The peculiar moral doctrines, then, which Jesus taught according to the gospels, could in no manner, have even aroused suspicion, let alone opposition, on the part of the Jews, whether learned or simple. His ethics certainly furnished no explanation why either the governing party or the people at large, should have desired to remove the teacher of Nazareth.

But what about his unqualified condemnation of the Pharisees? Are we not told that he lashed them with indignant tongue, spared no words, however cutting, to expose their hypocrisy, hurled at them such epithets

as "whitened sepulchers," denounced them as "devouring widows' houses," as men that "said and did not do," and "made pretense at offering long prayers?" Did he not in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican picture the former as burning with a desire to be seen of men in order to get all the credit he thought he deserved? It is true, it is in these terms that Jesus is represented as calling to account the Pharisees. But one, who like Jesus, must have stood in the very center of the Jewish national life and the national hopes of his times, could not have addressed such reproaches to those to whose party he undoubtedly belonged. A pen writing at a time when the temple had long been in ruin, and the political and national life of the Jews lingered merely like a faint echo on hills about to be shrouded in the folds of a night broken only by a star, the twinkle of which seemed to prophesy a distant restoration, traced indeed this ungainly portraiture of the most prominent party, not to say sect, that during the reign of the first Roman emperors, influenced most deeply the religious, the social and the political ambition of their people.

The Pharisees were not hypocrites, and Jesus, one of their number, could not so have misjudged them. The oft-quoted enumeration of the seven classes of Pharisees which we find in a Baraitha (Sota, 22a.), fails to corroborate the estimate of the Pharisees as crystallized in the New Testament description. There is no doubt in my mind that this very rabbinical passage is itself a reflection of the New Testament reproaches. Joel,* among others, has made it plain that the New Testa-

* Blicke in die Religionsgeschichte, I. and II.

ment writings influenced in more than one regard the traditions of the rabbis. The whole context of this Talmudical passage, in which the different types of the Pharisees are numbered, confirms the suspicion that it dates from a time when even the name had become a mere matter of etymological speculation, and had passed out of consciousness of the people, as standing for a definite idea expressed by it. (Sota, 20a., 22a.) (Conf. *אשה פרושה* as though *פרושים* was the same name.)

The investigations of Geiger have shown conclusively, though some of the details of his theory are open to modification, that neither Josephus nor the New Testament furnishes a correct account of the true character of the sects or parties into which Judaism, contemporaneous with Jesus, was cleft. Josephus wrote under the spell of an ambition to represent his people in the most favorable light to the Romans. For this reason all his statements are open to the suspicion of exaggeration, if not willful misrepresentation. Where he describes the opinion of the Sadducees and the Pharisees, he is clearly actuated by the desire to impress the Romans, for whom primarily he wrote, with the idea that the Jews, as well as they, could be proud of philosophical schools flourishing on their soil. At least, he employs the terms current among the Stoics, to characterize the doctrines on which the sects parted company from each other.

Remembering this, the student must dive beneath the surface in order to utilize the information furnished by the protégé of the Flavian emperors. Religious questions did not so much divide the people as did national political issues. The Pharisees represented the

hope of national independence. As their name indicates, they were the separatists or particularists. As long as Israel was under foreign dominion, it could not execute its mission; to throw off the galling yoke of Roman insolence is the day dream of even the moderate, while the zealots among them, impatient to defer action for the consummation of their fond ideal, restive under restraint, held at this period already the hand on the hilt of the sword or dagger, waiting for the word, the chance to draw the whetted weapon from the scabbard. Closely involved in their national ideas is the doctrine, which according to Josephus, is pointed, as he puts it, in their faith in providence, their belief in the angels, and the dogma of resurrection which they taught. And even what Josephus represents as belief in the immortality of the soul, or the future life, is connected with their hope of national restoration, and finds in it its proper explanation.

The Jewish doctrine of providence at this stage of its development, viewed divine government much rather in its relation to the destinies of nations than the fate of individuals. If the Pharisees, to use Josephus's phraseology, believed in providence, while the Sadducees rejected this doctrine, the gist of the controversial opposition is this, that the Pharisees held, with every fibre of their heart, to the thought that Israel was destined by God himself to be an independent nation, owner of the Holy Land, defiled now by the foreign despot, but to be cleansed of the intruder; if they taught the existence of angels, they had in mind a notion which the Talmud also figuratively expresses, that over every nation presides a guardian angel, while over Israel God himself rules as the protector. Their an-

gelology thus, of which Josephus makes so much, has the same bearing as their doctrine of providential government. What Josephus formulates as the doctrine of immortality refers to their expectation of "the world to come." The term "world to come" *'Olam Haba* does not connote the state of the individual soul after death. This question, both in Biblical and in the first post-Biblical periods, had but little weight. What the Pharisees expected was a re-adjustment of conditions here on earth; the cycle (*'Olam*) of present wickedness, represented by Rome having run its length, would give way to a new cycle of goodness, which was bound to confer independence and triumph on Israel. When this revolution should have been accomplished, even those generations that had to descend into the gloom of the grave before their hope had been realized, that suffered without requitement, and pined without satisfaction, would re-rise from their resting places in the dust, and share the glories of that promised new condition on earth, bathed in the sunlight of God's justice triumphant.

This is the bearing of the Jewish doctrine of resurrection as held by the Pharisees; in the Messianic kingdom the dead will return to enjoy with the living its blessedness. The apocalyptic books prove amply this construction of the Pharisaic hope of resurrection; it is a now well-conceded fact that most of these apocalyptic writings originally were Jewish, though in the form in which we possess them, they have undergone a process of retransformation at the hands of Christians. National independence is also the key-note of the Messianic confidence of the Pharisees. The Messiah, for the Jew, is never the redeemer from original sin. He is,

however, the restorer of the state. He is King David, come again to rule over an independent people, freed from the dominion of the foreigners. Such a Messiah the Pharisees expected; many of them willing to bide the time of his coming; many others of them chafing under restraint, eager to speed his advent by open resistance, by bold combat.

If these were the political ideals of the Pharisees, the Sadducees had with them no sympathy. The Pharisees represented the party of the people; they protested that every Jew by birth was a priest; that the priesthood of the people was as sacred as was the priesthood of the temple. In fact, the religious symbolism crystallized in rabbinical ritualism, owes, in many respects, its rise to this protest of the Pharisaic fraternity. As the priests wore a certain garment typifying their purity, so every Jew was entitled to appear clad in the cloak emblematic of his priestly vocation ('Tallith). As they carried on their head-gear the inscription, "Holy to the Lord," so every faithful Jew was to encircle his forehead with a band recalling his service to the Most High (Phylacteries). The door-post of every house was to indicate that there was the entrance to a temple (Mezuzah). The table around which the family would gather, or the fraternity ('Haberim) would convene, represented the altar, and the meal the sacrifice, and as the priest before the service would wash his hands, so ablution was necessary before partaking of the food.

The Pharisees are virtually the builders of the synagogue. They emphasized its equivalence to the temple. They set the prayers, if not over and against the sacrifices, at least on one plane with them. The Phari-

sees, of course, were burdened also with certain weaknesses. Piety, in their sense, presupposed learning. The danger was great, and the Pharisees did not escape it, that pride would find lodgment in their souls, pride sprung from their erudition, and leading them to despise the common people. In fact, the Pharisees were the aristocratic order of intellect and piety, entrance to which was gained through the gateway of scholarly attainments. With the working, toiling masses of the people, notwithstanding their democratic fundamental principles as directed against the priestly aristocracy, admission to whose ranks was conditioned upon birth, the Pharisees had but little in common. They held themselves aloof from them, for they accounted them sinners, who, on account of their ignorance, had no knowledge of the many requirements of a truly religious life, and who often wilfully to their material advantage neglected to discharge to the full their religious obligations. The "people of the country" were altogether too careless about the duty not to contaminate themselves in their free intercourse with the pagans. But enough of them.

The picture of Jesus as drawn in the gospels, gives indication that, on the whole, he was of one mind with the Pharisaic party. It has for a long time been held, and the error also in our day occasionally is repeated by men who occupy even Jewish pulpits, that Jesus was a member of the Essenic order. We know but little of this band of ascetes. The etymology of their name is still under dispute, and has so far baffled the ingenuity of competent scholars. Legion is the number of the derivations proposed from both the Greek and the Hebrew-Aramaic. The former, including that

of Philo (from *ἐσιώτης, ὁσιώτης*), which has found for a long time greater favor than others, are clearly wild and random guesses. But the Hebrew or Aramaic root from which the title of this monastic fraternity is a sprout, is far from definite settlement. While *'Hazan* (חזן) "strong;" *Jesse* (the proper name ישי) or *'Hasha* (חשיא), "to be silent" (Bishop Lightfoot), and even *asi* (אסיא) "healers," * scarce merit serious entertainment, even the proposition of Frankel to connect the name with "*tzanua*" (צנוע) "retired" is open to suspicion, as is Graetz's סהא "to bathe," with transposition of the letters. Hitzig, Ewald, Lucius, maintain that Essene is a translation of the (Syr.) אססה. חסיא, חסיא, *pious* (*'Hasâ, 'Hasin, 'Hasâyâ*)—a view which Schuerer (*Zeitgesch.* II., 469) calls "the most attractive" (*ansprechend*). But "enigmatical" as is their name, still more so is their origin. Perhaps, it was an exotic growth, pointing to India as its home.

Of the habits, the tenets and the character of these sectaries we are, however, better informed. Though some of Philo's books, from which formerly the facts were largely drawn, have been proven to be spurious compositions of a much later Christian century and to describe monastic orders which have no connection with the strange phenomenon of Jewish history, enough material of a trustworthy character is at ready command to draw the outlines of the picture. A few traits in Jesus's life bear a similarity to the conceits of the Essenes. But his celibacy, his seemingly communis-

* This etymology rests in the confusion of *θεραπευταί* (physicians) as the Essenes are nowhere called, with *θεραπευταί θεοῦ* (servants of God).

tic leanings are certainly insufficient to make him out to have been one of their number. Nowhere is it recorded that he clad himself in white garments; neither does he carry the "ax" or wear the "apron" (περιζωμα), which were the regalia of this freemasonry; he shrank not from meeting women, he practiced not the ablutions which were an essential rite in Essenism; if he was baptized, immersion in running waters (טבילה) was on certain occasions, a Pharisaic ordinance.

The Essenic spirit of Jesus's sermon must, therefore, be rejected. Jesus was a Pharisee. He seems, however, to have belonged to the moderate wing of the party, unwilling to resort to violent measures to accomplish the desired liberation. His counsel, "to give unto Cæsar what is Cæsar's and unto God what is God's," is proof in point. With the common people, however, he was in closest touch. He shared not the aversion of the learned toward the *'Ame-Haaretz*. But certainly these two traits, even if still more pronounced and emphasized in conduct than in words, would not constitute a flagrant departure from the Pharisaic standards; nor would they be sufficient to account for a possible enmity toward him in Pharisaic circles. If the Nazarene was a pretender to Messianic dignity, he could expect that around him would rally the very Pharisees, whose daily prayer, undoubtedly, at that time was that the long-expected scion of the house of David would appear to break the fetters which Rome, in her greed, had forged. There is a stronger presumption that if one of the two parties had an interest to silence the voice of the Galilean, it must have been the Sadducees. About this "sect" the New Testament is singularly reticent. Matthew mentions them but four times: iii.,

7; xvi., 1-6, together with the Pharisees. (The parallel verses of Mark viii., 11-15; Luke ix., 16, 29; xii., 1-54, omit them;) xii., 23, where they appear as denying the resurrection. In Mark, their name occurs but once (xii., 18), as it does in Luke (xx., 27); while they have entirely passed out of the recollection of John.

With more assurance, than justice to trestle it, the opinion has sometimes gone the rounds that the teacher of Nazareth must have in many points agreed with the Sadducean doctrines; as in the New Testament records, the dogma of the resurrection is the only problem at issue between him and them. Jesus is held to have emphasized the spirit over against the letter, and as the Sadducees were supposed to have rejected altogether oral tradition and rabbinical amplifications of the law, they have paraded in books as the promoters of the spiritual element in religion, and thus, as virtual allies of one "preaching the worship of the Father in the spirit." But this reasoning starts with fallacious premises. The very rabbinical subtleties, elaborated in the Pharisaic schools, were the outgrowth of the clear effort to allow the growing life freedom of movement, hemmed in and hampered under the letter of the law. The Pharisaic methods of interpretation asserted the supremacy of the actual conditions over the despotism of a remote past.

The Pharisees were the men of progress; the Sadducees the reactionary nobility. Recruited exclusively from the priestly families; according to common parlance, they were the literalists, rejecting tradition, while closely contending for the strictest observance of the written law as incorporated in the Pentateuch. If this conception of their attitude be correct, they must

have been in many regards the predecessors of the later Qaraïtes and had certain affinities with the Samaritans. But this view must not be strained too far; it requires serious modification. As the Pharisaic amplifications of ritualism were directed against them, we cannot wonder that they looked with but little favor upon the attempts of their opponents to dignify with priestly character every Jew, to project the national hope into vital importance, and to vest with essential prominence the house of learning and the synagogue, to such a degree, as almost to overshadow the glory of the Temple and its sacrificial and sacerdotal institutions. In so far, the Sadducees antagonized rabbinical tradition; but even they had a tradition, and were forced to venture beyond the crystallized word of the written code. They insisted upon their priestly birth-right, the select and elect sanctity of the Aaronitic families.

As it was the policy of Rome never to interfere with the religious institutions of those whom she conquered, —the Roman being himself the skeptic of all skeptics, the cynic scoffer at all religion, and therefore, not deeming it worth his while, under ordinary circumstances to interfere with such puerilities as temple service and priestly prerogatives;—the Sadducees had no reason to object to a continuation of Roman supremacy. Their privilege could not be larger, if Judea was once more to be independent. On the contrary, as the expected king would not be of their rank, and as they remembered that the assumption of the princely title by the priestly Asmoneans had opened the flood-gates of opposition and distrust on the part of the Pharisees, they had every reason to fear that under the order of “things

to come," in a state virtually controlled by the "Puritans," these fanatics of learning, their preponderance and influence might be somewhat diminished, and their berth be less comfortable. No wonder that they were extremely lukewarm in their national patriotism, and in inverse proportion favorably disposed toward the Romans.

The appearance of a Messiah would be, for them, from their narrow point of view, almost a calamity, certainly a very untoward event. This accounts for the statement made by Josephus that they rejected the belief in providence, tradition, the resurrection of the dead, concepts which, as I have shown before, are intimately interwoven with the *national* aspirations of the Pharisees. The Sadducees, if any among the Jews, might have had an interest in the removal of one, acclaimed by the populace, as the Messiah. But so strong could not have been this possible antagonism on their part to this claimant to Messianic honors, as to lead them to steep their hands in innocent blood.

From the shedding of blood the Jews and their laws recoiled. The zealots, who at that time began to terrorize the people, were driven to this last extreme by provocation of the most galling character. The Sadducees, as a class, did not share the tactics, or the methods of the Jewish Nihilists of those days, and their frame of mind was anything but one of a blood-thirsty temper. So, all things considered and carefully weighed, the conclusion is inevitable that even the Sadducees, at least, as we shall see, the larger portion of them, could have had scarce a motive for committing the crime which has been charged upon the Jews these sixteen

centuries. The Romans, and the Romans alone, could be profited by such an act of violence.

Let us cast, in order to make this as clear as possible, a glance at the conditions of things prevailing in Palestine at this critical period. The people had become restive under foreign domination. Mistaking patience for absolute stolid indifference, the Roman commanders had often outraged the religious susceptibilities of the people, over whom they ruled in wanton insolence. In their pride and presumption, they had ventured upon adding insult to injury under the thin disguise of putting the loyalty of the province to the test. They had, without the shadow of a right, misappropriated the funds of the Temple; they had carried the emblems of Roman supremacy, the figures of the Roman emperors, *divi* though human being, and thus so distasteful to every Jewish heart, in pomp and parade, defiantly through the streets of Jerusalem (Jos., Antiquities, xviii. 3, 1, 2; B. J., ii. 9, 2, 3, 4); the tax-gatherers plied their shady avocation without pity, sucking, vampire-like, the very aorta of the people dry to the last drop.

Nowhere were these indignities and the consequent sufferings, felt more deeply and borne more impatiently, than in the villages and hamlets dotting the Galilean hill-tops. The mountains are the homes of freedom, so sings a German poet. His description of the ruling passion of the sturdy mountaineers, corresponds not only to the temper of the free son of the Helvetian Alps, learning to love his liberty in the unapproachable caverns of the eternal snow, but tallies also with what stirred the souls of the poor and indigent, hardy and rough dwellers on the Galilean uplands. Many a one

at that time had sounded the call to arms, tearing himself away from the embrace of wife or mother, and dashing himself to death with proud courage, even though in fruitless folly, against the power of Rome. Rome took no pity on these loyal sons, struggling for an almost lost cause. As soon as they apprehended one of them in their nets, they affixed him to the cross as a rebel deserving no better fate. Some of these martyrs to their patriotism are known by name to us, among them especially, is one who is remembered as the heroic leader of a sturdy band, Judas the Galilean.

In these times out of joint the women about to become mothers, dreamt that they were destined to give birth to the Messiah, for all the portents of these years agreed with what the prophets had described as the preparatory conditions, leading up to the Messianic advent. Gog and Magog were indeed marshaling their impious forces for the desperate conflict. Vice stalked through the land; injustice squatted, grinning in its impudence, on the throne, a heartless usurper throttling the voice of the erst beautiful queen from whom the scepter had been promised not to depart. All ties of order seemed to be snapped; bands of robbers traversed the length and breadth of the land, committing outrage and filling their greedy stomach with the gain of pillage, respecting neither age nor innocence; breaking most shamelessly and shamefully, both the laws of God and the ordinances of man. The night was indeed at its darkest. Was then the hope out of rhyme, that now the light was nearest its dawn? The signs all spelled the old scriptural account of these fearful forerunners of the great day of the Lord; yea,

Israel's hour of freedom was near at hand. He was about to come, sure he would come now, presently, who would put to flight the vast hosts of iniquity.

But if thus the hopes of the people were strung to their highest pitch, the watchfulness of the Romans increased proportionately. The least outward indication of a rebellious spirit was visited with dire punishment, and no outrage was too great, no injustice too glaring, but was without compunction committed by those who had power over life and death. Crucifixions were a common occurrence, a daily event almost. Opposition was crushed with an iron heel. Sedition was immediately squelched; those spared in the broil and brush with the Roman troopers, were hurried to the most ignominious death on the cross.

Into such times was born the child of Bethlehem. Amidst the influence of these discordant years he grew up. He was a Galilean himself. But while as a rule the children of these mountain villages carried with them something of the atmosphere of their rude birth-place, and were rough of speech and rougher still of touch, he was gifted with gentle temper, and a tongue of sweet eloquence. He felt that he could speak and therefore must speak. His word awoke an echo in the breasts of his friends. Before even leaving his home and hamlet, he must have drawn around him a small band of devoted followers. These probably urged upon him the thought which grew apace within him, that he was indeed the one whom the nation expected; the "Messiah," anointed king; that he was the redeemer announced in the sermons of the many preachers of repentance, who even now, clad in the hairy robe of hermits, traveled from village to village, and called

the people to think on their shortcomings, in order to be prepared for the awful day.

What mattered his lowly birth? Had not David risen, because God raises from his lowliness the needy to set him with the princes; yea, the princes of his people? True, his personality was not cast in the lines which the prevailing opinions of the people attributed to the Messiah. The dreams of the nation had woven the picture of one who was a man for war, wielding the flashing sword, to cut asunder the cords • by which was bound the first born of God's children.

Jesus was a man of peace; he had nothing of the zealot about him, daggered to pierce if must be, the Roman to the heart. He was prone to submit in the unshaken faith that the despot, the foreign usurper, Edom, the arch enemy, would speedily run the length of his tether, and in his pride, invite crushing retribution to fall upon his wicked head; that the trust of the faithful would be rewarded by a harvest of joy reaped from the seeds of tears. The idea of the Messiah, as a man of suffering and patient submission, as an Ijob, *befoed but not befoeing*, must at this time, as it did later, have asserted itself by the side of the stronger impression of his leadership for combat. The "Ebedyahwe" of the second Isaiah, the "servant of God," this idealization of faithful Israel in exile, had, no doubt, begun to mix the colors on the palette of that universal artist, popular poetic vision. Jesus felt himself to be of one rhythm with that tender-hearted sufferer who bore and forbore that others might be healed. His disciples believed in him, from them he learned to believe in himself.

As the love and loyalty of his friends grew firmer and

firmer, and his own enthusiasm warmer and warmer, he lent a willing ear to the appeals of his followers, and the urging of those inner voices which men like him always hear, that he was the chosen instrument of providence to realize the great ends of his people's destiny. Under the sway of this idea he leaves the hamlet of Galilee, where, protected by the mountains and guarded by the living ramparts of hearts cuirassed in love for him, he was safe from the talons of the Roman eagle. He descends into the plain, and enters Jerusalem during the Paschal week. He has that trust of all great souls that the Father who has sent him, the God who has called him, will not forsake him now. He may venture into the very den of the lion, and a second Daniel, will not be scathed by the brute's hungry teeth.

But alas, his trust, so tender and so touching, fragrant flower of a noble soul, fruitage of a faith the like of which the world has witnessed but rarely, is not armor proof against the sword of Rome. A rebel he, in the eyes of the powerful, what care they for his convictions, the struggles of his soul, the confidence of his heart; what matters it to them that gentle his speech, that to the laden and weary, the halting and the limping, he has winged the words of consolation and of cheer? Why should they pause to weigh that he has counseled forbearance, and never encouraged armed resistance? Enough for them that the dreamer calls himself the Messiah, the King of the Jews. Why should they wait for further development; why show him more consideration than to the thousand others who durst question the legitimacy of Roman supremacy? Crucifixion was the mode of execution of Roman criminals. To the cross with him. The greater

the injustice the more beneficial the results. It will strike terror into the hearts of those minded like him. It will teach those who rely upon their sword that if the gentle was not spared, the bold need not hope for mercy. Acting upon this reasoning, the Roman procurator had Jesus arrested, and in accordance with Roman precedent and procedure, affixed to the cross. Typical Roman as he was, he embittered the agony of his prisoner by jest and ribaldry, scoffing at his pretended royal dignity, and mocking with a crown of thorns his expectancy of the royal diadem. To the Romans the would-be Messiah was dangerous; to a majority of the Jews, his coming was the signal of joy. The Jews, be they Pharisees or Sadducees, had no motive for either betraying the Nazarene youth to the Romans, or pronouncing upon him the supreme penalty of the criminal code.

That the writers of the gospels themselves felt that the Jews, the population of the capital were altogether innocent of the final catastrophe, is most tellingly brought out by their picture of Jesus's entrance into the capital. Of course this scene which they paint so vividly in all the colors of triumphant exultation, is not to be credited with historical authenticity, or even accuracy. It, like so many other incidents in the gospel "biographies," is a Midrashic actualization of an Old Testament verse and description. The rabbinical books overflow with similar textual applications, and in reading the chapters of this Christian Haggadah one expects at every turn to meet with the standing הא דכתיב "this is what is writ." In fact, it is there. For the phrase that "might be fulfilled" is the equivalent of this rabbinical introduction to Biblical quotations.

But as told by our authors, the welcome extended to the Nazarene, remained significant. Good psychologists, the old writers or compilers were, though historical difficulties or discrepancies did not disturb them. They overlooked the circumstance that the assumed betrayal by Judas Iscariot at once jeopardized their account of the popular and public reception of Jesus.

A man passing through the gates in the manner Jesus is by them recorded to have passed, could not remain unknown to the Romans or the priests. The cynosure of all eyes on Sunday, he could not have so speedily relapsed into such obscurity that the despicable venality of Judas—itself again a trait worked out simply in the fashion and method of the Midrash—had to be utilized to single him out from among his companions. What lies at the root of Judas's treason, will appear in another connection presently. While thus not successful in harmonizing the details which, drawn from various and varying sources, they, with poor historical discrimination, worked together in the story, the men to whom we are indebted for the description were well enough acquainted with human nature to understand that, however fickle and unstable popularity may be, the transition here supposed, within that short interval of four days, from the heights of fiery favor to the depths of frenzied fury, without any apparent cause, is totally unreasonable. The same men who on Sunday shouted "Hosannah" could not have been those that on Friday succeeding clamored for the blood of him, whom they had greeted so rapturously with fervent demonstrations of transported, affectionate enthusiasm.

Jesus had, however, aroused the hostility of a certain influential family, high in authority, and on terms of the closest intimacy with the Roman Procurator. It would seem that the unholy traffic carried on in or near the Temple, had excited the indignation of his pure soul. There is to my mind nothing so impressive in his whole career as his bold burst of righteous wrath at the presumption of the money-changers. This gentle man, scourging these hawks from the holy courts, is so true in its psychology, so correct in its conception, that it belongs to those gems which make one feel like begging cold criticism to spare. But I have reason to suppose that this very occurrence lifts a little corner of the thick veil of haze and darkness which have settled on the last act of this drama.

The Talmud preserves the fact that the sale of the pigeons, and the changing of money, for sacrificial purposes was a monopoly of the family of Hannan. That this Hannan is identical with the Annas (*Ἀννας*) of the New Testament and the Annanos (*Ἀννανος*) of Josephus, admits of no doubt. Caiaphas was the son-in-law of the proprietor of this bazar. The practices in vogue there are an object of comment by the rabbis (j. Pea, I. 6). To break the exorbitant prices, no less a man than R. Shimean b. Gamliel interfered. (Kerithoth I. 7.) Jesus was thus brought into direct conflict with the most powerful friends of Rome. They were stung to the quick; they felt the lash as though it had fallen on their own back. They lost no time to remove all possibility of this further meddling with their affairs. In order to do this, they had no need to buy the services of one who had won his affection. All they had to do was to denounce him to Pilate as a rebel, for they had

the ear of the Procurator. The rightful succession of Caiaphas to the priesthood is more than doubtful. He held the pontifical seat by appointment and connivance of Rome. Nor was it at all necessary that they should go through the form, not to say the farce of a trial.

Rome, when desirous of putting out of the way a rebel, was never particular about the order of his going. Pilate acted promptly upon the suggestion of his friends. Straatman (*Theol. Tijdschrift*, 1880), a Dutch theologian who has attempted to disentangle the knotted strands of the skein of tradition, holds that this bold deed of Jesus was the very means of calling the attention of the Romans to his presence and pretensions. According to him, this was the succession of events: On the eve of the Passover, Jesus ate the Passover meal with his disciples; at its conclusion he retired to Gethsemane to prepare himself for his public appearance. Early on the fifteenth of Nisan he repairs to the Temple to accomplish its cleansing. A tumult ensues; he is captured along with others. The priests lodge complaint against him. He is a rebel, a Messiah, a Galilean, whose home is the very cauldron of insubordination. He does not deny his pretensions! Enough evidence to seal his fate. "To the cross with him," as was the usual summary course with others of his kind. The order is at once carried out. The Romans, possibly goaded on by Caiaphas, crucify him.

The gospels present no clear account of the last days of Jesus. Certain traits are certainly incongruous with each other. Of one we have already spoken. Jesus entering in great state the city of Jerusalem, thronged by the multitudes come to celebrate the Passover, is welcomed with loud acclaim by the populace,

who meet him waving palm leaves and singing hosannas. And the same populace, so rejoiced at his coming, we are asked to believe, demanded his blood a few days later. Yea, he to whom almost royal honors were paid, as he passed through the gates of the city, is pictured as so little known that a traitor had to be hired to point him out to his captors.

Here is a clear discrepancy, which to reconcile, taxes indeed the ingenuity of all for whom the Bible must be literally true. These obscurities, however, are natural, and due to the process of development which the story of Jesus underwent, and which has left its indelible traces on the records as we have them. Nor are the gospels more definite in their account of when the trial took place, and on what day the death sentence was executed. In the Synoptics, Jesus dies both on the 14th day and on the 15th day of Nissan. The first of these two days was the eve of the Passover festival: (*παρασκευή*), and on the evening of that day began the "great Sabbath," as the fourth evangelist correctly remarks. But we now find in Matthew, xxvii. 62, the high priests and the Pharisees convened on the morning after the day of the death of Jesus, before Pilate to request of him that a guard be stationed at the grave.

From the words of the gospel we glean that this morning must have been the 15th day of Nissan, from which it would appear that Jesus died on the eve of the Passover, that is to say on the 14th, although according to xxvi. 19 and 20, he sat down on the eve of this very day, with his disciples, to the Paschal meal. Mark, in chapter xiv., relates, that Jesus had partaken of the meal described on the day fixed for it by the law,

that is to say, the 14th day of Nissan; he assumes thus the 15th day to have been the day of the death; but in chapter xv. 42, he nevertheless writes:—"And when even was now come, because it was the preparation, that is the day before the Sabbath"—from which it would appear that Jesus had been crucified, not on the 15th day, but on the 14th. In Luke, we have the same confusion. According to him, Jesus eats the Passover with his disciples, this must have occurred on the 14th day. On the succeeding day he dies, and yet in chapter xxiii. 54, the day of death is not distinct from the day of preparation, "when the Sabbath drew on."

This want of harmony has been noticed long ago. According to Clemens of Alexandria, Jesus celebrated the Passover on the 13th day of Nissan, and took occasion thus to present himself as the veritable Paschal Lamb. The uncertainty which marks the dates of the gospel, is in fact a consequence of the controversy that agitated for many years the church, as to the proper time for celebrating Easter. Two ideas, both incorporated in the gospels but conflicting with each other, have left their impress of these discordant details. There is first, the marked tendency to urge the communion service as a substitute instituted by Jesus, for the Hebrew Paschal meal. In order to carry out this design, Jesus had to partake of this meal at the proper hour of the day fixed for it by the Pentateuch. On the other hand, is the desire to emphasize the fact, that Jesus himself was the lamb offered at Eastertide, therefore his death had to take place on the very day preceding the "great Sabbath," or the day before the first of the Passover. The omission of the lamb on the table around which Jesus and his disciples were gath-

ered to eat the "last supper," is a proof—the value of which none will underrate—that all these accounts must have been written after the destruction of the second Temple, when the sacrificial service ceased altogether among the Jews.

There are other indications, too, that the writers of the gospels, while apparently fixing the execution for the 15th day of Nisan, had no comprehension of the character of that day as a holiday in the Jewish festal cycle. But the supposition is that it was the first day of Pessa'h. According to the law, on such a festal day, all unnecessary work of the ordinary kind had to be interrupted and cease altogether. But, according to the New Testament description, on the day of the execution, that is to say, the festival, we find the people at work as though the hour had no special religious significance. Simon, of Cyrene, returns unconcernedly from his field. Rich Joseph of Arimathea, purchases fine linen in order to wrap in it the body and to deposit it in the grave, which, according to Matthew xxvii. 60, he himself must have hewn out in the rock.

Furthermore, the three synoptics call the day on which the verdict was found simply *παρουσκευή*, Preparation, *אָרַב שַׁבָּת*, that is to say, Friday, without indicating that it must have had a higher character than the ordinary precursor of the Sabbath. This is strikingly in contrast with the manner in which other passages of the gospels (Luke, ii. 42; John, iv. 45, vi. 4, vii. 8, xxxvii. 11 and 56, xii. 12; Acts ii. 1, and especially Acts xii. 3) speak of the Jewish festivals and show deference to them. That the account in John is totally at variance with the day of the other gospels,

has been noticed before.* These facts would be sufficient in themselves, if not to invalidate, to throw serious suspicion on the authenticity of the tradition, which places the responsibility for Jesus's death upon the Jews, or the Jewish authorities of that time. This suspicion, however, is changed into certainty, when we remember that years before the year in which these events are placed, the Jewish courts had lost the right to pronounce the death penalty.

A certain degree of autonomy imperial Rome accorded the provinces. These administered, after a certain system of home rule and local self-government, their own affairs according to their own laws. Ordinary civil and criminal jurisdiction was not taken from the home courts. But the *jus gladii*, or the *potestas gladii*, the *power over life and death* was, as in all other provinces, so in Judæa, the unquestioned and exclusive prerogative of the imperial *legatus* (of senatorial rank) and of the *procurators*. (Schürer, *Zeitges.* I., 389.) John is cognizant of the fact that the Jewish authorities lacked the right to execute the sentence of death. (John, xviii. 31.) The Jerusalemic Talmud [Sanhe-

* The *πρώτη τῶν ἀζύμων* (Matth. xxvi. 17) or the *πρώτη ἡμέρα τῶν ἀζύμων* ὅτι τό πάσχα ἔθουον (Mark, xiv. 12) and the *ἡμέρα τῶν ἀζύμων*, ἧ ἔδει θύεσθαι τό πάσχα (Luke, xxii. 7) cannot denote any other day than the fourteenth of Nisan; and its peculiar designation as the "first of the unleavened," etc., is grounded on the terminology of Exodus, xxii. 15-20. Therefore, the fifteenth, *i. e.* the festal day itself is supposed in these three chapters to have been the day of execution, with which John, xix. 14, and its *παρασκευή τοῦ πάσχα* cannot be harmonized.

drin I., 1. (18a) and VII., 2 (24b)] fixes the time when this right to try capital cases ceased in Israel as forty years before the destruction of the Temple; the number is clearly a free assumption, for ever since Judæa was under Roman control נִטְלוּ דִינֵי נַפְשׁוֹת מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל has this been the case.

It is very easy to *assume* as Thomson ("Books Which Influenced Our Lord") and even Schürer do, that there were exceptions to this rule; and to prove their assumption by the incidents related of the trial of Jesus. But the trial is the very fact which needs proof; unless such exception can be substantiated by other evidence, the presumption is that the usual legal state of affairs prevailed. Even if the Sanhedrin had the power to pronounce sentences of death, a trial such as is pictured in the New Testament, is a simple impossibility on the well-established principles of Jewish penal procedure. The death penalty was inflicted only in very rare and extreme cases. While the Jewish law had not abolished it, it had thrown such safeguards around the life of the accused as to render the supreme penalty almost an impossible verdict.

The court was chosen with special reference to the kind-heartedness of its members. None was allowed to sit as a judge unless he had children, on the supposition that parental hearts were more inclined to mercy than those who had never tasted the joys and felt the responsibilities of fatherhood. Men of cruel disposition and quick temper were specifically excluded. Moreover, so strong was the aversion to capital punishment among the Jews that a court which once in seven years, or as another version has it, in the space of seventy years, pronounced the death penalty, was

branded as composed of murderers. Circumstantial evidence was not admitted. The confession of the accused was not sufficient to lead to his conviction; at least two witnesses had to testify to the facts, and, furthermore, they had to prove that the defendant had been warned before the act of the consequences of his proposed or expected offense. The trial had to take place in a certain hall of the Temple, in day-time, never at night.

If we believe the gospels, the court convened in the house of the high priest, and sat during the night. In matters affecting life and death the trial had to last two days, and one night always had to intervene in order to give the judges time for reflection, and thus keep open the possibility of a change of their verdict in favor of the accused. The court was polled twice. Once at the close of the first day, and the second time on the succeeding day; the younger members voting first, so as to guard against undue influence on them by the authority and weight of their elders. Those who on the first ballot had voted guilty, were allowed to change on the second ballot, which took place on the next morning, their vote to not guilty. Those who had favored acquittal had not the privilege to alter their verdict. For this reason no trial could take place on the eve of a Sabbath or a festal day, a provision which is clearly violated if we accept the date of the three first gospels. Immediately on the finding of the final verdict, the convicted culprit was led to execution. But such precautions were taken as looked even then yet for new evidence to acquit.

It would appear from a Tosephta (Sanh. II., 7) that a certain class of criminals were not executed at once,

but were brought to Jerusalem and there kept until the next succeeding pilgrim festival, with a view to carrying out the command in Deuteronomy, xiii. 12, that "all the people may hear and see, and shall no longer sin defiantly" **לֹא יִזְדֹּן עוֹד**. This rabbinical passage, which, as it has parallels also in the Mishna and in Siphre, has been urged to prove, that, as the case of Jesus would fall into the category of offences mentioned, his execution may have lawfully been fixed for the holiday. Joel, in order to blunt the edge of this argument, claims that the passage in question is a precipitate of the very gospels which make the statement that Jesus was crucified on the Passover.

However ingenious this explanation by Joel is, it has been well refuted by L. Wagenaar in *Isr. Letterbode* IX., pp. 65 ff., who calls attention to the significance of the term used, which is *Regel* **רֵגֶל** and not *Yomtov*, **יוֹם טוֹב** the former standing for the festal season, while the latter indicates the festal day itself. **יוֹם טוֹב** is the technical term used in the Mishna, where trials are prohibited for the Sabbath eve or the day preceding a holiday. (Sanhedrin, V., 1.) Crucifixion was not a mode of execution among the Jews. There is even not a word for it; the word employed meaning *hanging*, and not crucifying **תִּלָּה**. Affixion to the cross *before* death had ensued, as we are led to assume, was the punishment of Jesus, was an outrage which sent a cold shudder and chill through the very marrow of the Jews, and is clearly denounced as a pagan custom. (Conf. Siphre, Deut. xxvii. 23: **יִבֹּל יְהוָה תּוֹלִין אוֹתוֹ** **בִּשְׁהוּא חַי בְּדֶרֶךְ הַמַּלְכוּיֹת עוֹשִׂין**. Philo and Josephus abound in passages testifying to the utmost horror

which the Jew entertained of crucifying one who was *not* dead.

The Jewish law ordained four methods of inflicting the supreme penalty: Death by the sword, by throttling, by lapidation, and by burning. The last two mentioned were only *formally* executed, in every case means being taken to kill the wretched convict before either stone was thrown, or the lighted wick thrust down his throat. Certain it is that the body of the dead criminal was scrupulously guarded against mutilation, a provision of the Jewish law which is violated in the description of the New Testament. Never could more than one execution take place at the same time. The circumstance that two thieves were affixed to the cross simultaneously with Jesus clinches the argument that in his execution the Jews had no voice.

Nor is it clear on what accusation Jesus was cited before the tribunal. It is generally supposed that he was arraigned for misleading the people into sin *מסית*. But neither before his trial nor at his trial did Jesus say or do aught that from a Jewish point of view could be misconstrued into a substantiation of this charge. The incident related, that the high priest and his associates rent their garments at an utterance of Jesus, would suggest that he had been indicted and was tried for blasphemy. But here again all the well-established precedents, rules and circumstances, which in the eyes of the Jewish law constitute the offense, fail us in the trial recorded in the New Testament. Blasphemy (*Giddooph*) according to all authorities (Sanh. VII., 5) consisted in cursing God with the direct pronouncement of his ineffable name. *המגדף אינו חייב עד שפרש השם*. The saying attributed to Jesus, that he could destroy

the Temple and rebuild it within three days, can by no stretch of construction be contorted into that offense for which the Jewish law provides lapidation as the punishment.

As the witnesses repeat his boast, they utterly fail of making out a case. Nor is Jesus's answer to the high priest's question (Matt. xxvi. 64) such proof as the law required. In the first place, he does not utter a blasphemy. He refrains from pronouncing the "name;" he substitutes for it the word "power" גבורה as pious Jews are wont to do. Even if *he* had spoken blasphemy, his own admission was insufficient to convict him. Conviction for this offense was, in fact, most difficult under the Jewish code. There is on record the case of a certain false prophet, Ben Sotada. In order to secure the necessary evidence, "two sages were hidden in the outer chamber so that they might hear his voice, and as the inner room was lit up, they were able to see him." Upon detection by this ruse, the culprit was stoned to death. (Tosephta Sanhedrin X., 11.) This precedent of Ben Sotada is, indeed, a most curious parallel to Jesus's case, as related in the New Testament. It explains the part Judas Iscariot played. The betrayal, as practiced according to the gospels, is improbable in the highest degrees.

As said before, it is not clear why one was needed to point out the suspect, who must have been known to the Romans, since he had entered the city in royal state, 'midst the shouts of a rejoicing throng. But if there is any substratum to the reported defection of one of the disciples, it is none other than such a course as is outlined in this Baraitha. One of his disciples (or two) may have consented to play the eavesdropper.

But, the truth of the matter is that the story of Ben Sotada and that of Jesus have influenced one the other. While it is perfectly plain (see Derenbourg, *Essai de l'histoire*, etc., p. 486, Note ix.) that in the rabbinical records there is question of another man and another place than Jesus and Jerusalem, still the violations of the law in this one instance (sentence of death on the first day, or in the night), are as plainly indistinct reminiscences and impressions of the gospel story, which, as the history of the various versions of the one trial of the Talmudical accounts proves, left in the rabbinical text traces of its own gradual development and crystallization. (See Joel, *Blicke in die Religions-gesch.*, II.; Dr. Sam'l Hirsch, *Lettre sur les usages et lois des Juifs*, Gand, 1865.)

On the other hand, this incident of Lydda, where Ben Sotada was so summarily stoned to death, reacted upon the gospels. They had, however, to such a degree lost all touch with Jewish life and law, that they could not fit into the frame the rôle of the tricky disciple. Instead of a witness, in hiding, they, regardless of the difficulty of harmonizing with it their other details of a public entrance into the city, make him a traitor. Be this as it may, Jesus could not be sentenced on such evidence as brought out, either as a Mesith מסיח seducer to idolatry, or as מנדרף a blasphemer. The open confession, that he considers himself the "son of God," constituted neither an offense nor a sin in Jewish eyes. בנים לה "Sons of God," the prophets often enough had called the people. Every Jew is a son of God as is every human being.

The conduct of Pontius Pilate is another strange anomaly calling for some comment. He acts the cow-

ard, who, while wishing to save Jesus, does not even raise one hand to accomplish his professed purpose. Such conduct as this is altogether incompatible with what we know of his character. As his consent was necessary to make the sentence legal and effective, it is surpassing strange that he should not, at least, have given the Jews permission to carry out the verdict according to their law, but handed Jesus, for whom he felt compassion, over to his own soldiers. The Jews, certainly, would have spared him the agony of suffering on the cross; they would have stoned him to death, which, as said before, meant death in a most humane manner, before the first stone was hurled. They would not have added insult to injury by adorning the cross with the ironical inscription, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." They would not have scourged him.

That Pilate understood how to handle mobs is well attested by many a bloody day, visiting the presumption of the Jews to resent insult offered to their most religious sentiment, with cruel attack and the unrestricted privilege to kill and to sack given to the soldiers by this procurator of Rome. According to Philo, Pilate was of a violent temperament, stubborn in the extreme, who could never make up his mind to treat the Jews with consideration, let alone to yield to their wishes. (Legation to Caius, M. 2, pp. 590.) Agrippa I. charges him with venality, violence, robberies, insulting behavior, intolerable cruelties; continued executions of death sentences without "previous trials." The Roman emperor, Tiberius himself, characterized the policy of Pilate by declaring that "a good shepherd tends his sheep without cutting their throats." Pilate

was indeed a cut-throat, "a fly who had sucked itself full of blood from wounds struck most wantonly." Such a man would be the last one to listen to the cries of infuriated Jews clamoring for the blood of one whom he wanted to protect.

Nor is it at all apparent why the Jews should have insisted upon the execution of Jesus. Is it at all tenable that the very same people who welcomed him with such signal demonstration of affection and love only four days previously, should now, all of a sudden, without any provocation, have made the market-place shake with the cry for blood—the blood of one who was of their own flesh and bone; who was known to have for the people the warmest heart; who was patriotic if any were; who had not imperiled their peace, but who had resisted the arrogance of the ruling priest, for whom the people at large had but little regard, who had indicated that the government of Rome, so iniquitous and so cruel, would speedily pass away in order to make room once more for Jewish freedom and Jewish independence? Josephus tells us that when the brother of Jesus, Jacob, was stoned to death, in consequence of the intrigues of this very Annanus's son, the people of Jerusalem protested most emphatically against this outrage, in consequence of which denunciation Annanus was deposed from the high priesthood. A people who had so much consideration and pity for the brother of Jesus, would certainly not have so far forgotten themselves as to insist upon the cruel execution of the other brother, who still more must have been beloved by them.

Thus, from whatever point of view we study this problem, the conclusion is forced upon us that the re-

sponsibility for the death of Jesus must forever rest on the Roman authorities. The Jews could not have been profited by his removal. He had taught nothing or done nothing but what a most pious Jew could teach or do. He had claimed nothing but what many more claimed. He had won the affection of the people and not its hatred. He was an object of suspicion to the ruling priestly family, who denounced him as a traitor, a possible dangerous rebel to Pilate, who, on footings of great intimacy with this priestly family, speedily complied with their request, and in true Roman fashion ended the suspect's career.

But, if even the Jews had committed the atrocious deed for which they have been hated and hounded, now these weary centuries, and for which they are held guilty today by the prejudice of many among their neighbors, the question still remains and recurs, whether if, what the church insists on, the divine character and mission of Jesus must be allowed, the Jews were *free* to act otherwise, than according to Christian view they did. It is in a most serious vein, though hesitatingly, that I put the question. It is far from my mind to treat irreverently a dogma which bodies truth for many of the best of men who now draw breath under the sun. But if that dogma is true, and Jesus was God, come to redeem by his blood the world from the fatal corruption of the first sin, were the Jews aught else in the hands of Providence than a blind tool? Can man presume to oppose the purpose of God? Had Jesus not died, would man be cleansed of his guilt, washed by the blood of Golgotha?

If such redemption is the consummation of the divine scheme of salvation, it was ordained in God's own

councils, that he who appeared in the flesh should die on the cross, and far from hating the Jews for thus helping along as they had to, but the sightless agents in the hands of the all-directing God, the glorious work of redemption, those who rejoice that the death of Jesus has taken from them the taint of guilt, should turn with gratitude to the Jews, but for whom such salvation would not have been wrought for the waiting, worrying, lost and laden race of men.

But let me not lose myself in such theologic subtleties. History has spoken; her facts, immovable as the eternal rocks, pedestal the innocence of the Jews of that day. Streams of tears and rivers of blood have washed the rocky, stony road, along which, sore of foot, weary of wandering, the Jew has groped his way through the lands of the earth. Driven from his own home to carry into a larger world the knowledge of the one God indwelling in every man, the Father who has never forsaken his children on earth, never doomed one to die for the guilt of another, never affixed taint of weakness upon one for the disobedience of the first progenitor of all.

Wherever he came, the Jew, the charge that *he* had nailed to the cross the noble son of his race followed him. Eyes looked at him askance; pure souls drew back from him; hatred sharpened her sword, bigotry lit her torch. With fire and flame, with dungeon and danger, the world attempted to wrest from the Jew the confession that he had committed the foul murder. He would not confess because he could not. He knew that his fathers had no reason for hurrying to the criminal's grave the gentle teacher whose voice had made musical the rough crags of the Galilean hills.

A better time is dawning now. The east is golden now even with the promise of the coming day. The old conceits, that like so many jealous clouds have so long intercepted the full glory of the radiant sunshine of mutual trust, are fast disappearing. Among these that will go sooner or later is also this accusation, which for so many hundred circuits of the revolving sun has been the source of misery and of anguish for the very kinsmen of the prophet of Nazareth.

When that day will have risen to the zenith, the noon-tide round, the heavens, indeed, will be full "of the glory to the Highest, and peace will obtain and good will among men on earth." Then will Jew take by the hand the non-Jew and feel the warm response of the grasp. Then will be hushed the old cries, and a new song will roll its music from pole to pole. The Jew himself will then take up the pathetic petition, "Father, forgive them, for they knew not what they were doing." He will pardon most willingly those that trespassed against him in their ignorance of the sequence of events which led up to the catastrophe of Golgotha.

But until the last mists will have been cleared away, every Jew will and must protest that not his fathers, not the people, not the teachers of Jerusalem, had condemned Jesus. For his death none other must be held accountable than Pilate, the typical Roman, who was Roman cruelty incarnate and Roman selfishness triumphant. *The Jews did not crucify Christ.*

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